

November 4, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) testified at the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources' hearing on legislation pertaining to Indian Land Trusts. Arcuri highlighted the many issues that the land into trust process currently leaves unresolved and called on the Federal government to take a strong role to assist tribes, state and local governments and school districts in addressing these issues.

"The federal government cannot continue to simply throw up its hands and insist that tribes and local governments resolve these difficult and complex issues among themselves," **Arcuri said** . "There is no question that tribes need and are entitled to a fair and reasonable amount of sovereign land on which to conduct their affairs. However, the current process does not adequately balance tribal self-determination with the potential impact on local communities and it is time for the federal government to address these issues."

During his testimony, Arcuri spoke of the long-drawn-out issues associated with the Oneida Nation and Cayuga Nation land claim litigation and trust applications. He discussed the opportunities and thousands of jobs that the Oneidas have created at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino in Verona, but cautioned that issues surrounding the land into trust process have led to an impasse between the tribes, New York State and local municipalities. Arcuri criticized the federal government for being reluctant to assist in these matters and called on federal agencies to take a leading role in helping tribes and communities resolve Indian land into trust issues in the future.

Among the other issues addressed by Arcuri were:

- Lack of recognized limits on amount of land that can be taken into trust;
- Collection of local and State sales tax on transactions involving non-Indians;

- Loss of local and School District property taxes;
- Maintenance of local roads and bridges in trust region;
- Checker-boarding of trust parcels;
- State and local regulatory enforcement

To see Arcuri's full testimony before the House Committee on Natural Resources, use the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSk_pbioScM

###